





Mule definede Florue

CAP HORD

Ia plus none
en iode et vitamines









PREVENT POLIO CRIPPLING

SISTER MENNY
POLIO FOUNDATION

From the India

Whay Cate Chil.

in mimory of R. B. Fuller.

1916 J.K. M. Cormick

237 E. 48 th St.

1944 Francist M. Cormick U. D.

1228 76 4 15.

7. 1. 2. 2. 16 4 15.

7. 1. 1. 1.



A History of the
India Wharf Rats



# A History of the India Wharf Rats

1886-1911

Boston: Printed for the Club

The Merrymount Press
1912

HS 2925 267 IS3 1912 BOSIDO TOLDERS The "Wharf Rats"



# "Wharf Rats"

NE bright morning in November, 1886, Sigourney Butler and I went down to Atlantic Avenue to look up some witnesses in a case, in which we were both engaged; and, in our walk, we wandered on to India Wharf, which had not then been "improved" by spreading steamship sheds. As we sat at the end of the pier looking out at the harbor and the shipping, we talked, I remember, of a boy in one of Horatio Alger, Junior's books who eked out the family larder by catching flounders from a like wharf, and wished that we had hooks, lines, and bait with us.

As we walked back from the pier end, we noticed with admiration the easterly façade of the India Building, designed by Bulfinch, retaining the stately character of the days before steam contrivances made our lives so easy and commonplace.

The building and the wharf seemed a

symbol of the old India trade, and only a little turn of one's mental kaleidoscope was needed to bring before the eye the lofty "Indiamen" tied up to the wharf, with their cargoes of spices, silks, and indigoes; the shrewd Yankee skippers, with their brass-buttoned blue coats and tall hats, hurrying to the offices of the owners bearing the ship's papers; the sailors, bronzed by the tropical suns and "full of strange oaths;" the dapper supercargoes, their eyes glistening with the thought of successful adventures which brought their sweethearts nearer to them; the red-faced, portly owners, exulting over the rich cargoes which were being unloaded.

Said Sigourney, as he pointed to the door numbered 34, which was the only one of all the doors that was hospitably open: "There must be a fine view of the harbor from the upper windows of that building."

We climbed the stairs to the loft just under the attic floor. From the windows we found the expected view of the harbor, dotted with islands; the old Teapot, the starting-point to all the ways of the world, around which the Puritan Mother City has grown. By the front windows were a few well-worn wooden chairs, and on a shelf two or three churchwarden pipes were lying. The chairs were so placed by the window that their occupants commanded the view of the harbor. We were delighted with the low ceiling, its huge beams of darkened pine, and with the time-stained sheathing of the wall, and we explored the attic floor and its dark recesses.

On the way down stairs we stopped at the office of E. M. Fowle & Company. At the desk was seated a crafty looking old man with hair and beard of white spun glass, conducting his trade with the West Indies by reading a copy of the "Boston Advertiser." We asked him if he knew who owned the building, and he replied that he was the tenant of the whole building on a lease which had some years to

run. We then asked him upon what terms he would sub-let the two upper floors, and he replied \$120 a year. He told us that the chairs and pipes belonged to some retired sea captains, who used to sit by the front windows on pleasant days, looking into the harbor and spinning yarns. I cannot help thinking that some flavor of the seven seas has been left in our loft by these old mariners, and imparted to the Club, as the turnip which Uncle Pinkham's ram devoured gave quite a flavor to the stew made for the crew from his flesh.

We at once hired these premises for two years, and after consulting with a few friends, sent out the following circular:

#### CONFIDENTIAL

Boston, Nov. 11, 1886.

SIR:

Comfortable and characteristic quarters have been engaged in the third story (southeast corner) of the India Building, commanding a fine view of the harbor and shipping, wherein it is proposed to establish an association to be called the East India Men, which shall meet on alternate Saturday afternoons to partake of a dinner to be cooked by the members assisted by a distinguished Ethiopian chef.

The entrance fee to provide fitting up the quarters will not exceed \$15 and the annual assessment will not exceed \$10, as the rooms are to be had at a low rent.

Each member will have a locker, where he may keep his oil-skins, spy and other glasses, and each member will provide his own chair and table furniture.

You have been recommended as an old sea dog of gastronomic taste and culinary accomplishments.

Will you meet at the proposed quarters at 34 India Wharf on Saturday, the 13th inst., at 3.00 P.M.?"

Most of the men invited joined the Club.

The original members were George C. Adams, Charles S. Bird, Edward Brooks, Heman M. Burr, Sigourney Butler, C. A. Coolidge, S. Cunningham, W. J. Dale, Jr., William Farnsworth, A. W. Longfellow, Jr., C. A. Longfellow, R. S. Milton, G. A. Nickerson, F. Peabody, Jr., W. E. Russell, Frederick W. Thayer,

William R. Tyler, S. D. Warren, Jr., William F. Weld, E. M. Wheelwright, and John T. Wheelwright.

At a further meeting on December 4, 1886, this constitution was adopted:

# PREAMBLE

The India Wharf Rats is an association assembled for the purpose of reviving American commerce, cultivating the culinary arts, and promoting the fine arts. Article 1. It shall be limited to 25 members.

ARTICLE 2. Its affairs shall be managed by the skipper, the chief cook, and the secretary and treasurer, who shall form an executive committee, to hold office for one year. All officers shall be elected at the first meeting in October.

ARTICLE 3. Ten members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE 4. The names of candidates for membership shall first be proposed to the Club at a regular meeting, and shall then be posted in the Club room and shall be

acted upon at the next regular meeting. Two negative votes shall exclude.

The By-Laws fixed the admission fee and the annual assessment at \$15. The Club once formed, then came the fitting up.

Our present skipper, Captain "Wad," who has so steadily handed down the tradition of the Rats, partitioned off the kitchen, and designed the bar, which "whispers the last enchantments of the early nineteenth century."

Each man brought his spy and other glasses and his chair and table fixings, and gifts. The records show the givers of these gifts. Billy Russell gave poker chips, for instance, and when an enterprising reporter of the "Boston Herald," in the mask of a guest, came early to the rooms and made a transcription of the records, for publication in the "Herald," and wrote a description of the Club rooms, Governor Russell was deeply distressed to find it recorded in the public press

that he had given poker chips. He stoutly denied that he ever had made such a gift, but the records stared him in the face.

It was our original plan that members should cook the dinners. This is to-day indicated only by the mixing of cocktails and salad dressing by the dainty fingers of the wharf rats themselves, but the practice of the members waiting on table has never died out. In the early days, Bill Tyler's Cocktail was known by two names, "The Neverslip Horseshoe" & the "Hancock Inspirator," after the other tenants of the building.

An unwritten rule of the Club is that no champagne shall ever be served at a Club dinner by any one. This rule has kept the Club on its original lines of the simple life.

The first dinner was held December 11, 1886. The records state:

"Beef, chowder and teal are all good, and cheese so flamboyant that it had to keep in the loft.

"Cost \$1.50 a head. Kitty \$6."

Here is where Billy Russell's poker chips came in, and these games of poker, which were very small, and as friendly as such games can be in an imperfect world, furnished a large part of the revenue of the club through the bounty of Miss Kitty.

In looking over the records it is interesting to note how our native game has disappeared from the markets. The dinners for the first ten years always included such dainties as partridge, or terrapin, woodcock, reed-birds, yellow-legs, plover, curlew, quail, doe birds, snow birds, widgeon, teal, ducks of all kinds, prairie chicken; and game pie often appeared.

In the last ten years, of all these birds, ducks alone were served, and instead of our American game we have English pheasants, Scotch black-cock, and Scotch grouse. This proves conclusively that without game laws, in the end no one has any game at all. Perhaps the destruction of privileges may have a like result

upon the existence of other good things of life.

In its first days the steward of the Club came from the good ship Volante, owned by Farnsworth and Charles K. Cobb. He was succeeded by James R. Young, a New Orleans colored man, who was hired in 1885 by William F. Weld to be the steward of the yacht Gitana, filling the place of a recreant steward who deserted from the yacht while a dinner party was in progress. From his first installation until his final departure from this country with the female head of a Medford colored family, James was a character of great distinction. He was a tall mulatto with wool of an auburn hue. He spoke French as well as he did English, had a nice literary taste, a sweet tenor voice, and best of all, he had the true Creole touch in his cooking. A cook who could charm the birds from the trees by singing "Roll dat Cotton," or "Them Agonizing Cruel Slavery Days," and who for nearly twenty years served us so well, - may be pardoned, at least by us, for seeking the primrose path. Wherever you wander, James, we wish you well; we are sad without the flash of your teeth, the sound of your tuneful voice, and the results of your sympathetic touch on the gridiron.

A few words may be said about the Club songs. Waddy introduced the "Constitution and the Guerrière." He heard Lieutenant Henn of the Galatea sing it when George Warren had in rather bad taste sung the "Shannon and the Chesapeake," a song grating to our ears, set to the same tune. Henn was in his vacht, the Galatea, in Marblehead harbor. He had come over to contest for the America's Cup with the Mayflower. I do not know whether Waddy introduced "We'll rant and we'll roar like true British sailors," or "heroes," as the song in the copy printed in our records has it. This song is found in one of Marryat's novels, more vulgarly phrased.

The "Star-Spangled Banner" is sung

at all the Club dinners, as it should be at every gathering of Americans. I should say this, however, with more force, if it were possible for anybody to sing it or to remember the words.

The Club has entertained many guests, some of them distinguished, and all agreeable. The first dinner at which many guests were present was given to some of the Old Guard of Boston Good Fellows, February 12, 1887,—Benjamin F. Stevens, George M. Stearns, Peter Butler, and Major J. Henry Sleeper.

When our brother Russell was elected Governor, a dinner was given in his honor, December 5, 1890.

Washington's Birthday has always been celebrated by a breakfast, which for many years was given from the treasury of the Club.

On June 9, 1888, the Club went on its first cruise on William Weld's schooner yacht, Gitana. This cruise became an annual feature, and later, when Dr. Charles G. Weld became a member, he took out

the "rodents" on his steam yacht, the Malay, on many pleasant fishing parties in Massachusetts Bay.

In the last few years Dr. Elisha Flagg has invited the Club to his place at Buzzards Bay to delightful clambake picnics.

At private dinners ladies may be present. The first was given by Warren on February 27, 1887, and many a pretty girl has appeared all the prettier for the dark background of brown boards and the quaint surroundings.

Members have also been in the habit of having their dining clubs meet regularly at the "Rats." The "Glades Winter Club" began this practice in 1887, George C. Adams giving the dinner. After this dinner James Young was asked what the gentlemen did, and he replied, "They just yelled, sir."

The "Old Paris Crowd" of architects, of which A. W. Longfellow and E. M. Wheelwright were members, met here often.

Among other guests at the Club at [ 19 ]

different times may be mentioned General Simon Bolivar Buckner (who sent from his old Kentucky home the receipt for mint julep in our records), Thomas B. Reed, Thomas F. Bayard, Commodore George H. Perkins, U.S. N., Governor Roger Wolcott, Governor Eben S. Draper, Governor W. Murray Crane, Admiral R. D. Evans, Admiral J. C. Fremont, Congressman John Simpkins, and many naval officers, including officers of the first White Squadron which came to Boston when our Navy was being built.

On April 2, 1888, a dinner was given in honor of the appointment of Sigourney Butler to be Comptroller of the Treasury of the United States. Many leading Democrats of the day were present.

A reminiscence of the Spanish War is found in the record of a dinner of the Ward Room Mess of the U.S.S. Catskill, given by Heman Burr, Assistant Paymaster, U. S. N., April 29, 1899. [ 20 ]

Thousands of us, who slept better at night during the progress of that war because we knew that the monitor Catskill, with Heman Burr on board, was defending our coast, are glad that these brave men had one pleasant feast.

For more than twenty-five years this Club has been reviving American commerce and contributing to the gaiety of one nation at least. The old rooms to-day look the same, and the brown beams of the ceiling vibrate with the same old songs. The good fellowship of a quarter of a century ago still lives in the new generation.

The faces of many of our dead members look down upon us from the walls; but their spiritual presence does not sadden our meeting.

George C. Adams, who was our youngest original member, joining the Club just after he graduated from College, always enlivened our dinners with song and story. George played on the football team in college, and was an outdoor man, yachtsman, and gunner.

John F. Andrew was always in public life true to the high ideals of his father, the great war governor. In the state legislature and in Congress, he was independent and able.

James Hudson Bell had been a member but two years at the time of his death. He was a very sincere, loyal friend, a man whose upright character impressed itself upon all who knew him.

Sigourney Butler, the Huguenot with a dash of Irish and the soul of a true-blooded Yankee, who gallantly cared for those he loved when misfortune came to his house and shouldered gaily the burden of life, beloved of every one.

Stanley Cunningham, who was a constant attendant at the dinners of the Club. A brave-hearted man, who bore the vicissitudes of life with courage, and who was always a congenial and much liked member of the Club.

William J. Dale, Jr., whom Billy Rus-

sell appointed railroad commissioner. A fair-haired giant of Viking mould, sincere and big-hearted.

Richard B. Fuller, who had a genius for friendship, a most lovable and delightful man.

Charley Longfellow, citizen of the world, who as a boy ran off to the war and served at New Orleans, and later at the front for nearly a year, as a cavalry officer in the Army of the Potomac, until on picket duty he was desperately wounded. He had sailed to all the corners of the globe, and was always the most considerate and delightful of companions.

Richard S. Milton, who in the Civil War was one of the most gallant captains of artillery. In his command at Gettysburg was the greatest death rate of any battle in the Civil War.

George A. Nickerson, who served well in great business affairs, and who in the last year of his life was a most effective member of the Massachusetts Legislature from his town of Dedham. A deeply conscientious man, with a strong interest in literature, art, and horticulture.

George Norman, the brilliant man of affairs and lover of sport and horses, who, after a few weeks' coaching, passed an examination as volunteer ensign in our navy and served gallantly on the Gloucester under Richard Wainwright in the battle of Santiago.

Governor William E. Russell, who, had he lived, might to-day be leading the now confused hosts of his fellow-countrymen to the promised land of honor and justice.

Charles F. Sprague, the flashing wit, who, in the middle of his merry youth, pulled himself up with a round turn and served the state and nation well as state senator and as member of Congress.

William R. Tyler, the high-minded teacher and finished scholar and gentleman.

Samuel D. Warren, most conscientious and generous of men, filled with zeal to

make better the world in which he lived. In art and sport he was a leader. In the conduct of a great business he introduced profit-sharing and shortened the hours of the laboring people.

William and Charles Weld, true sportsmen, generous and public-spirited men, the sincerest of friends.

Hugh Whitney, the big hearted and generous.

"The sound of whose voice and whose pleasantword Hushed all murmurs of discontent."

J. T. W.









# APPENDIX

#### OFFICERS

Skipper

1886–1895 Sigourney Butler 1895–1897 William R. Tyler 1897 A. W. Longfellow

Chief Cook

1886–1898 John T. Wheelwright 1898–1904 Edwin B. Bartlett 1904–1907 Louis Bacon 1907 Harold Blanchard

Chief Cook's Assistant 1900–1904 Louis Bacon 1904–1907 Harold Blanchard 1907 H. H. Richardson

Purser

1886–1895 S. D. Warren 1895–1902 Morton S. Crehore 1902 Robert Saltonstall

Purser's Assistant 1901–1902 Robert Saltonstall

#### MEMBERS

When no city is mentioned, Boston is understood, Names in Italic are those of deceased members, o. m. stands for original member

R. L. Agassiz, '05 14 Ashburton Place John F. Andrew, ob. 1895 George C. Adams, ob. 1900 Edward W. Atkinson, '97 152 Congress St. 53 State St. Louis Bacon, '00 Francis R. Bangs, '10 18 Tremont St. Edwin B. Bartlett, '97 322 State St., Albany, N. Y. Francis S. Blake, '00 37 Beacon St. Harold Blanchard, '03 53 State St. James H. Bell, ob. 1902 John P. Bowditch, '12 Framingham, Mass. Edward Burnett, '93 111 5th Ave., New York Sigourney Butler, ob. 1898 Charles A. Coolidge, o. M. Ames Building John T. Coolidge, Jr., '87 114 Beacon St. Morton S. Crehore, '93 127 Purchase St. Charles L. Crehore, '97 155 Beacon St. S. Cunningham, ob. 1907 Wm. J. Dale, Fr., ob. 1896

164 Marlborough St.

28 State St.

Elisha Flagg, '98

Richard B. Fuller, ob. 1910 Francis Gray, '02

Horatio Hathaway, Jr., '99 28 State St.
T. S. Hathaway, '00 New Bedford, Mass.
Robert Homans, '02 53 State St.
Thomas L. Livermore, '93
14 Ashburton Place
Robert Livermore, '11 60 State St.
A. W. Longfellow, O. M. Tremont Building
Richard K. Longfellow, '97
Tremont Building
Charles A. Longfellow, ob. 1893
William M. Lovering, '98 Taunton, Mass.
Richard S. Milton, ob. 1904
Charles H. Mills, '98-'00, '02
10 Wall St., New York
Hallam L. Movius, '07 89 State St.
George A. Nickerson, ob. 1901
James Otis, '00 Hyannisport, Mass.
H. F. Otis, '99-'02, '03
Fisher Ave., Brookline
Frederic Parker, '00 50 Congress St.
J. Harleston Parker, '99 110 State St.
H. H. Richardson, '03 28 State St.
Howland S. Russell, '98 Lancaster, Mass.
William E. Russell, ob. 1896
Hugh D. Scott, '05 35 Congress St.
Robert Saltonstall, '97 Readville, Mass.
Herbert M. Sears, '08 53 State St.
C. F. Sprague, ob. 1901
Charles E. Stratton, '93 70 State St.
[ 31 ]

#### APPENDIX

Francis H. Stone, '00 New Bedford, Mass. Frederick M. Stone, '97 Sears Building Dr. Paul Thorndike, '09 24 Marlborough St. William R. Tyler, ob. 1897 Samuel D. Warren, ob. 1910 Charles G. Weld, ob. 1911 William F. Weld, ob. 1893 Hugh Whitney, ob. 1907

# HONORARY MEMBER

John T. Wheelwright, o. m. 19 Milk St.

# RETIRED LIST

Heman M. Burr, '87–'03, '05 Somerset Club J. R. Reed, '87 68 Devonshire St.

# RESIGNED

Charles S. Bird
Edward Brooks
Frederick Brooks
John G. Coolidge
William Farnsworth
George H. Norman, ob. 1907
Francis Peabody
Roger F. Sturgis
Frederick W. Thayer
John E. Thayer
Edmund M. Wheelwright



#17/29

